

City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle
Public Information Meeting
New Castle Middle School
Tuesday – October 20, 2009 – 6 p.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Cochran
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also present: Treasurer Janet Carlin, City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, Building Official Jeff Bergstrom

Council President Barthel explained the meeting was to provide residents with information and answer questions regarding the three projects that are the subject of the October 27 referendum.

Bruce Jones, of Greenstone Engineering, gave an overview of the three projects and how the process got started. The funding is connected to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act for Green Project Reserve Funds.

The projects were identified by areas with existing problems: flooding, drainage and stormwater management.

The two objectives are to address existing problems and look at what is coming down the road in terms of future regulations.

Delaware Department of Natural Resources And Environmental Control's Frank Piorco explained he is the representative of the State and is involved in the permitting process.

The Buttonwood project

It has two parts: high storm events that have tidal flooding occurring in the wetlands areas. If it occurs long enough, there is no area for stormwater to drain behind Buttonwood dike. The primary purpose is to control tidal flooding, improve drainage and reduce street and localized flooding. Secondary purposes are to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff, improve water quality, and enhance stream and wetland habitat.

The project involves constructing a self-regulating tide gate, constructing a new stream, and constructing a new wetland.

The Washington Park project

The problems in that area are drainage problems, street flooding and localized flooding.

The purpose of the project primarily is do improved drainage, reduce street and localized flooding; secondarily to remove pollutants and improve other aspects of the system.

City of New Castle Stormwater Management Facility Retrofit project

This involves multiple systems: Airport Holdings, Centerpointe, Boothhurst, Twin Spans and River Edge.

The purpose is to address structural maintenance and increase capacity.

Building Official Bergstrom explained two of the systems are owned by the Trustees of the New Castle Common and for the others there are maintenance agreements with property owners.

Council President Barthel went over the details of the funding for the projects. The total cost is \$1,374,172. Fifty percent of the project cost is to be forgiven, so the cost is \$661,250.

He walked through the plan that would allow the City to complete the project without raising taxes. That would involve using money currently being used toward the Library project, once those payments are completed, and for the Public Safety Building, once that payment has ended. The projects would be paid off in the City's 2015/2016 budget year.

The Trustees have indicated a contribution of \$190,000 toward the project.

Responding to a question from the audience, Larry Irelan, of the New Castle Conservation District, said the project is being funded with federal and state money so it will be publicly bid.

Mike Alfree, a member of the Trustees, said the Trustees committed to the \$190,000 unanimously.

Don Reese asked if the property owners responsible for the private drainage system in the industrial parks would be contributing money for the project. Other speakers agreed the business owners should pay their fair share.

The DNREC representative said the projects requiring working with private land owners.

Mr. Jones, responding to a question of whether the work comes with a guarantee, said it will solve the problem.

Mr. Irelan said the contracts have a February deadline to be awarded.

Residents were reminded the vote takes place on October 27.

The informational meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Michael A. Dickinson
City Clerk